

REMARKS

Applicant gratefully acknowledges the Examiner's indication that claims 16, 18, 19, 22 and 23 would be allowable if rewritten to include all of the limitations of the base claim and any intervening claims and to overcome an objection for informalities to claim 16. Accordingly, claims 16 and 22 have been amended to include the limitations of the base claim and any intervening claims. In addition, claim 16 has been amended on line 5 to replace "the latter" with "said hub." Since claim 17 depends from claim 16, Applicants respectfully assert that in view of the present amendment, claim 17 also contains allowable subject matter.

Claims 13-15, 17, 20, 21, and 24 were rejected under 35 U.S.C. §103(a) as being unpatentable over the alleged prior art disclosed by the applicant in Figs. 1-4 and discussed on pages 1-7 of the specification in view of U.S. Patent No. 3,777,582 to Durdin. By this amendment, claims 13-15, 20-21 and 24 have been canceled without prejudice. As stated above, Applicants assert that claim 17, which depends from claim 16, is not unpatentable because the Examiner has indicated that claim 16 contains allowable subject matter.

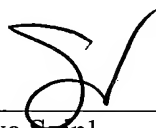
CONCLUSION

For all of the above reasons, Applicant respectfully asserts that claims 16-19 and 22-23 are in condition for allowance and a prompt notice of allowance is earnestly solicited.

The below-signed attorney for applicant welcomes any questions.

Respectfully submitted,

GRIFFIN & SZIPL, P.C.



Joerg-Uwe Szipl
Registration No. 31,799

GRIFFIN & SZIPL, P.C.
Suite PH-1
2300 Ninth Street, South
Arlington, VA 22204

Telephone: (703) 979-5700
Facsimile: (703) 979-7429
Email: gands@szipl.com
Customer No.: 24203